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REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTICES.

The Prodromus of Nicolaus Steno's Dissertation concerning a Solid Body enclosed by a Process of Nature within a Solid. An English Version with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes by JOHN GARNETT WINTER, with a Foreword by WILLIAM H. HOBBS. The Macmillan Company, 1916.

This work is a contribution to the history of geology, mineralogy, and palaeontology, being Part II of Volume XI (Contributions to the History of Science) in the University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series.

In a brief preface the author expresses his obligations to several scientists for assistance rendered him in the preparation of the work and to several others at home and abroad for important material and other aid given.

The foreword (six large pages) by Professor Hobbs is devoted to " The Science of the Prodromus of Nicolaus Steno " and presents the methods and results of the work. For the scientific reader this foreword is specially important, but here a few quotations must suffice. " Steno is the pioneer of the observational methods which dominate in modern science, but he was destined to pass away and be almost forgotten before the methods which he used were to be adopted by students of science." " Steno . . . was the discoverer of the fundamental law of crystallography known as the *law of constancy of interfacial angles.*" Very interesting is a quotation from Steno himself: " The nurse of doubts seems to me to be the fact that, in the consideration of questions relating to nature, those points which cannot be definitely determined are not distinguished from those which can be settled with certainty ".

Steno was compelled, of course, to make his theories accord with the Mosaic account of the creation and with biblical chronology, and consequently he says some things that are absurd and inconsistent.

The introduction (thirty-five pages) consists of three parts: I. The Life of Nicolaus Steno. II. The Writings of Steno. III. Bibliography of the Prodromus.

I. Steno was born at Copenhagen January 10, 1638. His name was Niels Steensen which he Latinized into Nicolaus Stenonis. As his writings bore the name of Nicolai Stenonis, it was assumed that the nominative was Steno. He received an excellent general education in the schools and university of Copenhagen, though there is no evidence that he received a degree. He then specialized in medicine. His life at Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Leyden, and Paris must be passed over. In 1665 he is found in Florence attached as physician to the court of the Grand Duke Ferdinand II. Here he renounced Protestantism and was admitted into the Catholic Church December 8, 1667. Of the subsequent details of his life only a few can be mentioned here. In 1675 he took Holy Orders and subsequently as Vicar of Northern Germany and Scandinavia he became involved in difficulties with Protestant authorities. Moreover he practised such extreme asceticism, fasting and giving all he had or received to the poor, that even the Catholics were alienated. In 1685 he accepted a missionary call to Schwerin, "but the change meant only increased fasting and abject poverty, to which he succumbed November 26, 1686". His body was taken to Florence and laid away in the cloister of San Lorenzo. On a wall of this cloister there is a medallion portrait of Steno with a Latin inscription underneath which records the visit made by the geologists just after the congress at Bologna in 1881.

II. The writings of Steno are numerous but no complete edition of them has been published. Of the published writings there are twenty-three on anatomy, three on geology, and fourteen on theological subjects.

His researches in anatomy are important. At Amsterdam April 7, 1660, he discovered the parotid duct called *ductus Stenonianus.*

The Prodromus was the last of his scientific works and was written during the year following his conversion to Catholicism.

III. The bibliography of the Prodromus gives an account of the original edition, four reprints, an incomplete edition, and translations, closing with a list of selected references.

The translation is, of course, the essential part of Professor Winter's work. It is, on the whole, well done. The enormous sentences of the original are properly broken up, sometimes into several sentences, and occasionally even into paragraphs. The rendering is, in the main, as literal as clearness and good English would allow. It is greatly to be regretted, however, that mistranslations are not rare. A few samples will be cited. Sometimes a seemingly slight error is really very serious, as for instance when *semel iterumque* (page 2) is rendered "once or twice" (p. 206), or when *fila* (p. 43) is rendered "filings", or *longitudo* (p. 42) is omitted in translating (p. 241). Steno, speaking of man's power (*vis*) of accomplishing things contrary to the usual course of nature, mentions (p. 11) his *vim . . . inferendi mensis media Hyeme aestivos fructus,* which is rendered " [power] of producing summer fruits in mid-winter months ". After mentioning a twofold substance in the surface of shell-bearing animals, Steno adds (p. 54) *cuius accuratior indago non parum lucis affert ossium examini,* which is rendered " a careful examination of these is as illuminating as an investigation of bones " (the plural "these" is correct). Omitting other mistranslations, the reviewer must reluctantly mention an amazing error in the introduction. In the inscription under the portrait (p. 185) occurs ALTIORVM DOCTRINARVM, correctly rendered (p. 186) " of Higher Studies ", and in a criticism of the Latinity of the inscription we are told that " ALTIORVM in line 9 should be ALTIARVM ".

The work is almost free from misprints.

A study of the Latinity of Steno would be interesting but out of place here. It may be remarked that he speaks of the Dissertation itself as if it were already written, the rare use of the future in speaking of it referring, no doubt, to the time of intended publication. The translator several times erroneously renders a present by a future, as *expono,* " I shall set forth "; *explico,* " I shall explain ". The Dissertation, however, was not published and seems to have been lost if it really was ever written.

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Apulei Platonici Madaurensis de magia liber. Testo critico con introduzione e commento di Concetto Marchesi. CITTÀ DI CASTELLO, S. Lapi, 1914. (Collezione scientifica di Classici Latini e Greci. Serie Latina No. 1). Pp. 221.

It is rather interesting to observe that the first Commentary in Italian and, so far as I know, the first Commentary in English on the Apologia of Apuleius should have been so nearly contemporaneous that one could hardly have been influenced by the other. I confess that to me, personally, Professor Marchesi's work is in nowise as helpful nor as inspiring as that of the English editors. He believes in translation rather than elucidation. So do I—in moderation. But it seems to me that Professor Marchesi, himself, illustrates at times the besetting sin of this theory. He translates too often, he sometimes translates when there seems to be no necessity for translation. Nevertheless, the Commentary is good, although to my taste it is too concise, too rigorously exclusive of background to be either interesting or inspiring.

The Introduction is excellent and in some respects is a valuable complement to the work of Messrs. Butler and Owen.